Numb. 50

The TATLER.

By *Isaac Bickerstaff* Esq;

Quicquid agunt Homines nostri Farrago Libelli.

From *Tuesday August* 2. to *Thursday August* 4. 1709.

White's Chocolate-house, August 2.

The History of Orlando *the Fair.* Chap. I.

WHatever malicious Men may say of our Lucubrations, we have no Design but to produce unknown Merit, or place in a proper Light the Actions of our Contemporaries, who labour to distinguish themselves, whether by Vice or Virtue. For we shall never give Accounts to the World of any Thing, but what the Lives and Endeavours of the Persons (of whom we treat) make the Basis of their Fame and Reputation. For this Reason it is to be hop'd, that our Appearance is reputed a publick Benefit; and tho' certain Persons may turn what we mean for Panegyrick into Scandal, let it be answer'd once for all, That if our Praises are really design'd as Raillery, such malevolent Persons owe their Safety from it only to their being too inconsiderable for History. It is not every Man who deals in Ratsbane, or is unseasonably amorous, that can adorn Story like *Æsculapius*; nor every Stock-Jobber of the *India* Company, can assume the Port, and personate the Figure, of *Aurengezebe*. My noble Ancestor Mr. *Shake-spear*, who was of the Race of the *Staffs*, was not more fond of the memorable Sir *John Falstaff*, than I am of those Worthies; but the *Latins* have an admirable Admonition express'd in two Words, to wit, *Nequid nimis*, which forbids my indulging my self on those delightful Subjects, and calls me to do Justice to others, who make no less Figures in our Generation: Of such, the first and most renown'd is, that eminent Hero and Lover *Orlando* the Handsome, whose Disappointments in Love, in Gallantry, and in War, have banish'd him from publick View, and made him voluntarily enter into a Confinement, to which the ungrateful Age would otherwise have forc'd him. Ten *Lustra* and more are wholly pass'd since *Orlando* first appear'd in the Metropolis of this Island: His Descent noble, his Wit humorous, his Person charming. But to none of these Recommendatory Advantages was his Title so undoubted as that of his Beauty. His Complexion was fair; but his Countenance manly; his Stature of the tallest, his Shape the most exact; and tho' in all his Limbs he had a Proportion as delicate as we see in the Works of the most skilful Statuaries, his Body had a Strength and Firmness little inferior to the Marble of which such Images are form'd. This made *Orlando* the universal Flame of all the Fair Sex: Innocent Virgins sigh'd for him, as *Adonis*; experienc'd Widows, as *Hercules*. Thus did this Figure walk alone the Pattern and Ornament of our *Species*, but of course the Envy of all who had the same Passions, without his superior Merit and Pretences to the Favour of that enchanting Creature, *Woman*. However, the generous *Orlando* believ'd himself form'd for the World, and not to be engross'd by any particular Affection. He sigh'd not for *Delia*, for *Chloris*, for *Chloe*, nor for *Betty*, nor my Lady, nor for the ready Chamber-maid, nor distant Baroness: *Woman* was his Mistress, and the whole Sex his Seraglio. His Form was always irresistible: And if we consider, that not One of Five hundred can bear the least Favour from a Lady without being exalted above himself; if also we must allow, that a Smile from a Side-Box has made *Jack Spruce* half mad, we can't think it wonderful that *Orlando*'s repeated Conquests touch'd his Brain: So it certainly did, and *Orlando* became an Enthusiast in Love; and in all his Address, contracted something out of the ordinary Course of Breeding and Civility. However, (powerful as he was) he would still add to the Advantages of his Person that of a Profession which the Ladies favour, and immediately commenc'd Soldier. Thus equipp'd for Love and Honour, our Hero seeks distant Climes and Adventures, and leaves the despairing Nymphs of *Great Britain* to the Courtship of Beaus and Witlings till his Return. His Exploits in Foreign Nations and Courts have not been regularly enough communicated to us, to report 'em with that Veracity which we profess in our Narrations: But after many Feats of Arms, (which those who were Witnesses to 'em have suppress'd out of Envy, but which we have had faithfully related from his own Mouth in our publick Streets) *Orlando* returns home, full, but not loaded with Years. Beaus born in his Absence made it their Business to decry his Furniture, his Dress, his Manner; but all such Rivalry he suppress'd (as the Philosopher did the Sceptick, who argued there was no such Thing as Motion) by only moving. The Beauteous *Villaria*, who only was form'd for his Paramour, became the Object of his Affection. His first Speech to her was as follows:

Madam, *It is not only that Nature has made us Two the most accomplish'd of each Sex, and pointed to us to obey her Dictates in becoming one; but that there is also an Ambition in following the mighty Persons you have favour'd. Where Kings and Heroes, as great as* Alexander, *or such as could personate* Alexander, *have bow'd, permit your General to lay his Laurels.*

According to *Milton*:

The Fair with conscious Majesty approv'd
His pleaded Reason.

Fortune had now supplied *Orlando* with Necessaries for his high Taste of Gallantry and Pleasure: His Equipage and Oeconomy had something in 'em more sumptuous and gallant than could be receiv'd in our degenerate Age; therefore his Figure (tho highly graceful) appear'd so exotick, that it assembled all the *Britons* under the Age of Sixteen, who saw his Grandeur, to follow his Chariot with Shouts and Acclamations, which he regarded with the

the Contempt which great Minds affect in the midſt of Applauſes. I remember I had the Honour to ſee him one Day ſtop, and call the Youths about him, to whom he ſpake as follows:

'Good Baſtards — Go to School, and don't loſe 'your Time in following my Wheels: I am loth 'to hurt you, becauſe I know not but you are all 'my own Offspring: Hark'ee, you Sirrah with the 'white Hair, I am ſure you are mine: There's 'Half a Crown. Tell your Mother, This, with the 'Half-Crown I gave her when I got you, comes to 'Five Shillings. Thou haſt coſt me all that, 'and yet thou art good for nothing. Why, you 'young Dogs, d d you never ſee a Man before? Never ſuch a one as you, Noble General, reply'd a Truant from *Weſtminſter*. 'Sirrah, I believe thee: 'There's a Crown for thee. Drive on Coachman.

This Vehicle, tho' ſacred to Love, was not adorn'd with Doves: Such an Hieroglyphick denoted too languiſhing a Paſſion. *Orlando* therefore gave the Eagle, as being of a Conſtitution which inclin'd him ratherto ſeize his Prey with Talons, than pine for it with Murmurs.

From my own Apartment, Auguſt 2.

I have receiv'd the following Letter from Mr. *Powel* of the *Bath*, who, I think, runs from the Point between us, which I leave the whole World to judge.

To *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

SIR,

'HAving a great deal of more advantagious Buſineſs at preſent on my Hands, I thought 'to have defer'd anſwering your *Tatler* of the 21ſt 'Inſtant, till the Company was gone, and Seaſon over; but having reſolv'd not to regard any Impertinences of your Paper, except what relate particularly to me, I am the more eaſily induc'd to anſwer you (as I ſhall find Time to do it): Firſt, partly leſt you ſhould think your ſelf neglected, which I have Reaſon to believe you would take heinouſly ill. Secondly, partly becauſe it will increaſe my Fame, and conſequently my Audience, when all the Quality ſhall ſee with how much Wit and Raillery I ſhow you — I don't care a Farthing for you. Thirdly, partly becauſe being *without Books*, if I don't ſhow much Learning, it will not be imputed to my having none.

'I have travell'd *Italy*, *France*, and *Spain*, and fully comprehend whatever any *German* Artiſt in the World can do, yet cannot I imagine, why you ſhould endeavour to diſturb the Repoſe and Plenty which (tho' unworthy) I enjoy at this Place. It cannot be, that you take Offence at my Prologues and Epilogues, which you are pleas'd to miſcall fooliſh and abuſive. No, nò, until you give a better, I ſhall not forbear thinking, that the true Reaſon of your picking a Quarrel with me was, becauſe it is more agreeable to your Principles, as well as more to the Honour of your aſſur'd Victory, to attack a Governor. Mr. *Iſaac*, Mr. *Iſaac*, I can ſee into a Mill-ſtone as far as another (as the Saying is). You are for ſowing the Seeds of Sedition and Diſobedience among my Puppets, and your Zeal for the (good old) Cauſe would make you perſwade *Punch* to pull the String from his Chops, and not move his Jaw when I have a Mind he ſhould harangue. Now I appeal to all Men, if this is not contrary to that uncontroulable, unaccountable Dominion, which by the Laws of Nature I exerciſe over 'em; for all Sorts of Wood and Wire were made for the Uſe and Benefit of Man: I have therefore an unqueſtionable Right to frame, faſhion, and put them together, as I pleaſe; and having made them what they are, my Puppets are my Property, and therefore my Slaves: Nor is there in Nature any Thing more juſt, than the Homage which is paid by a leſs to a more excellent Being: So that by the Right therefore of a ſuperior Genius, I am their ſupreme Moderator, altho' you would (agreeably to your levelling Principles) that I am my ſelf but a great Puppet, and can therefore have but a co-ordinate Juriſdiction with them. I ſuppoſe I have now ſufficiently made it appear, that I have a paternal Right to keep a Puppet-Show, and this Right I will maintain in my Prologues on all Occaſions.

'And therefore, if you write a Defence of your ſelf againſt this my Self-Defence, I admoniſh you to keep within Bounds; for every Day will not be ſo propitious to you as the 29th of *April*; and perhaps my Reſentment may get the bettter of my Generoſity, and I may no longer ſcorn to fight one who is not my Equal with unequal Weapons. There are ſuch Things as *Scandalums Magnatums*; therefore take Heed hereafter how you write ſuch Things as I cannot eaſily anſwer, for that will put me in a Paſſion.

'I order you to handle only theſe two Propoſitions, to which our Diſpute may be reduc'd: The Firſt, Whether I have not an Abſolute Power, whenever I pleaſe, to light a Pipe with one of *Punch*'s Legs, or warm my Fingers with his whole Carcaſs? The Second, Whether the Devil would not be in *Punch*, ſhould he by Word or Deed oppoſe my ſovereign Will and Pleaſure? And then, perhaps, I may (if I can find Leiſure for it) give you the Trouble of a ſecond Letter.

'But If you intend to tell me of the Original of Puppet-Shows, and the ſeveral Changes and Revolutions that have happen'd in 'em, ſince *Theſpis*, and I don't care who, that's *Noli me tangere*; I have ſolemnly engag'd to ſay nothing of what I can't approve. Or, if you talk of certain Contracts with the Mayor and Burgeſſes, or Fees to the Conſtables, for the Privilege of acting, I will not write one ſingle Word about any ſuch Matters; but ſhall leave you to be mumbled by the learned and very ingenious Author of a late Book, who knows very well what's to be ſaid and done in ſuch Caſes. He is now ſhuffling the Cards, and dealing to *Timothy*; but if he wins the Game, I will ſend him to play Backgammon with you; and then he will ſatisfy you, that Deuce-Ace makes Five.

'And ſo, ſubmitting my ſelf to be try'd by my Country, and allowing any Jury of 12 good Men, and true, to be that Country; not excepting any, unleſs Mr. *Iſaac Bickerſtaff*, to be of the Pannel; for you are neither good nor true, I bid you heartily farewel; and am,

SIR,

Your Loving Friend,

Bath, July 28

Powell.

Note: That proper Cuts for the Hiſtorical Part of the Paper are now almoſt finiſh'd, by an Engraver lately arriv'd from Paris, *and will be ſold at all the Toy-Shops in* London *and* Weſtminſter.

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